THE TRAVANCORE RUBBER CONTROL BILL.

MR. KAYALAM PARAMESVARAN PILLAI (*Additional Head Sirkar Vakil*): I rise to introduce a Bill to control and regulate the extension of rubber cultivation in Travancore, and to provide for certain other connected matters. The Bill has been published in the Gazette with a Statement of Objects and Reasons. I move that the Bill be read in the Assembly.

MR. C. V. CHANDRASEKHARAN (*Ag. Director of Public Instruction*): I second it.

MR. KAYALAM PARAMESVARAN PILLAI (*Additional Head Sirkar Vakil*): In the other Bill, which we were dealing with till now——

MR. S. J. NAIR (*Nedumangad*): I submit that I oppose the Bill.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: That only affords the Law Member a greater opportunity to speak on the Bill and explain his position. (*Laughter*).

MR. KAYALAM PARAMESVARAN PILLAI (*Additional Head Sirkar Vakil*): In the other Bill we had under view the agricultural products in general.

Now I have to draw the attention of the House to a particular product, namely, rubber. Rubber is cultivated in considerable portions of this country. This rubber had its prosperous days and we have all heard of fabulous sums made by cultivators of rubber. Latterly, however, rubber fell on evil days and prices fell and rubber estates came to be abandoned and rubber cultivation was well nigh becoming a thing of past history. In 1934, an agreement was come to by representative associations and various Governments to give effect to a scheme of rubber restriction. The aim of the scheme, as is well known, is to regulate the production and export of rubber in, and from, producing countries with the object of reducing the world's stocks to a normal figure and adjusting, in an orderly manner, supply to the demand and maintaining a fair and equitable price level which will be reasonably remunerative to the efficient producers. This rubber restriction scheme was signed in London in 1934 by the representatives of British India, subject to the reservation of co-operation on the part of Indian States. Travancore has agreed to the scheme subject to Travancore's rubber export quota being revised, which has now been done. It will be noticed that the restriction applies both to the exports from a country as well as to the production within a country. The restriction in regard to export is effected by notifications under the Customs Regulation and this Bill provides for the restriction of cultivation within the country. It is obvious that, if the rubber restriction scheme is to work successfully, the production of rubber in a country should not be increased. It is therefore proposed that there shall not be any extension of cultivation of rubber.

MR. K. M. KURIAKOSE (*Muvattupuzha II*): What is our present position? Can we cultivate rubber now?

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DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The member must take his own legal advice.

MR. KAYALAM PARAMESVARAN PILLAI (*Additional Head Sirkar Vakil*): The main proposal in the Bill is to put a restriction on planting and replanting and to compel rubber producers and rubber factories to submit certain returns necessary for determining the quantity produced in, and exported from, this country. I trust that the principle of the Bill will be accepted; and if it is accepted, I propose to move that the Bill may go into a Select Committee.

MR R. SAMBASIVA AIYAR (*Kunnatnad II*): May I know why the production of rubber should be restricted?

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: You cannot now put a question to the Law Member. He has already taken his seat. You can express your opinion in a speech.

MR. R. SAMBASIVA AIYAR (*Kunnatnad II*): Sir, I find it difficult to support the principle of the Bill as I understand it. I hear that latterly there is a market for rubber in India itself. If there is sufficient demand for rubber in India itself, I do not see why the production of rubber should be restricted, and why we should fall in line with the international rubber restriction scheme to restrict production. That has not been made clear in the Statement of Objects and Reasons. Unless that point is explained I find it difficult to accept the principle of the Bill.

MR. KAYALAM PARAMESVARAN PILLAI (*Additional Head Sirkar Vakil*): If there should be restriction of rubber within a country, there should be restriction of the production of rubber. If a country is allowed to produce rubber without any restriction, it will be able to dump rubber in other countries and then what is the use of the rubber restriction scheme?

MR. R. SAMBASIVA AIYAR (*Kunnatnad II*): We need not be given anything more than the quota.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: When a member rises in his seat to give an explanation, are we to put questions to him?

MR. R. SAMBASIVA AIYAR (*Kunnatnad II*): I am just trying to understand the position.

MR. KAYALAM PARAMESVARAN PILLAI (*Additional Head Sirkar Vakil*): The total of the world's stock of rubber must be limited. Otherwise the price of rubber will go down. Therefore one of the conditions of the Rubber Restriction Scheme is that everybody must limit the production of rubber. So far as exportation is concerned, we should limit that also. If you are to produce rubber on an indefinite scale and at the same time are allowed to join the scheme, what is the use of that agreement? You will dump all your quota rubber in London and use yourself all the extra rubber, which you produce by extended cultivation and therefore you will be able to sell rubber at a comparatively lower price. Therefore, if there should be any real restriction for the purpose of keeping up the price of rubber in order that it may be remunerative to the efficient producer, there must be a

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[Mr. Kayalam Paramesvaran Pillai.]

limit to the stocks held in the world. One of the methods of restriction is to limit the exports and the other method is to limit the production.

MR. K. M. KURIAKOSE (*Muvattupuzha II*): Sir,—

MR. E. V. KRISHNA PILLAI (*Pattanamtitta*): The Law Member has replied. Can any other member now speak?

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Law Member has not replied. He was only giving an explanation with the implied permission of the Chair, an explanation which he thought would be useful. As a special case, it was permitted.

MR. K. M. KURIAKOSE (*Muvattupuzha II*): Before either supporting or opposing the principle of the Bill, I am sorry to say that, from the speech of the Law Member, I was not able to gather full information. I would like to get the following points cleared. First of all, are we in a position to deviate from the line of the British Indian Act or the World Rubber Restriction Act? If our law should be in conformity with the British Indian Act, the only position that we can take up is to fall in line with British India and accept their Act straight away without even a reference of the Bill to the Select Committee. But if we are in a position at least to make some slight deviations from the British Indian Act, or the World Rubber Restriction Act, I think I have some suggestions to offer.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: You can make your suggestions irrespective of the answer being given.

MR. K. M. KURIAKOSE (*Muvattupuzha II*): Then, assuming for the time being that this House has the power either to change or add to some of the provisions in the Bill, I think that some provisions in the Bill affect the poor agriculturists very hard. The rubber industry has grown to such an extent that it has almost become a cottage industry. You will find this to be true if you go to Palai or some of the north-eastern taluks of the State such as Todupuzha, Meenachil and Moovattupuzha.

MR. N. E. VARUGHESE (*Tiruvalla I*): ഇപ്പോൾ റബ്ബറിന് സപ്ലൈവില കിട്ടുന്നതുകൊണ്ടല്ലേ കൃഷിഇപ്പോൾ വിസ്തൃതപ്പെടുത്തുന്നത്?

MR. K. M. KURIAKOSE (*Muvattupuzha II*): അതെ, അത് എല്ലാവർക്കും അറിയാവുന്ന കാര്യമാണല്ലോ.

MR. N. E. VARUGHESE (*Tiruvalla I*): Restriction scheme ഇല്ലെങ്കിൽ ഈ വില കിട്ടുമോ?

MR. K. M. KURIAKOSE (*Muvattupuzha II*): Restriction വേണ്ടെന്ന് ഞാൻ പറഞ്ഞില്ല. നിയന്ത്രിതമെങ്കിൽ ചില വ്യവസ്ഥകൾ അപ്ലൈചെയ്യുന്നതിൽ വ്യത്യാസപ്പെടുത്തണമെന്നേയുള്ളൂ.

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Without affecting the interests of the vast majority of the big rubber cultivators or the world rubber restriction scheme, I think it would be possible for us to make some slight deviations just to exclude poor and small cultivators.

MR. K. KUNJUKRISHNA PILLAI (*Quilon I*): May I know whether, when the extent of cultivation increases, the quota also will increase?

MR. K. M. KURIAKOSE (*Muvattupuzha II*): The quota depends upon the demand in the rubber market. It is also dependent upon the quantity of production.

MR. K. R. ELENKATH (*Kalkulam I*): May I know whether the increase of production in the country will in any way affect the quota, if the quota is not revised hereafter?

MR. K. M. KURIAKOSE (*Muvattupuzha II*): I think that, even according to the present statistics, the quota will be revised. That is my expectation. Even the present statistics are not correct.

What I want to impress upon the House is that several provisions of the Bill lay hard and fast rules that affect the poor cultivators on a small scale by asking them to keep accounts and submit returns, etc. So if we are in a position to make any amendments to this Bill, I will add that these things should be looked into so that poor small cultivators be excluded from the strict rules of this Bill, especially the penalising Section.

Sir, with regard to replanting of neglected areas, I am of opinion that the whole area once under cultivation should be allowed to be replanted immediately as there is a likelihood of more demand for rubber especially in view of the fact that we are going to have many rubber factories in India itself, such as the Dunlop Co., in Calcutta, another in Bombay, etc. With these words, I support the principle of the Bill.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I shll now ask Dr. Kunjan Pillai to speak.

RAO SAHIB DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*): Sir, the position is this. We have agreed to join the International Rubber Restriction Scheme subject to the condition that the export quota allotted to Travancore will be revised. According to our representation, the quota has been revised and now it is obligatory on our part to take action for the restriction of the production and export of rubber. There was some time ago a heated discussion on this question in this House itself. Our demand for revision of the export quota has been granted; and so we have to fall into line with the rest of the world and enact legislation for carrying out our promise.

MR. A. S. DAMODARAN ASAN (*Mavelikara*): Under the International Rubber Restriction Scheme, is planting restricted in other parts of the world?

RAO SAHIB DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*): Yes. Both export and planting are restricted. I think my friend Mr. Kuriakose wanted to know whether, while remaining in the scheme, we can make deviations. No, Sir; if you want to be in the scheme, you will have to abide by the conditions laid down by the international committee.

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MR. A. THANU PILLAI (*Trivandrum—Rural*) : Can we honourably get out of the scheme at any time we like?

RAO SAHIB DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*) : Not for five years. The scheme will be in force for five years ; and during this period we cannot get out of it. If you do decide to get out of it against your own promise, I doubt whether it will be an honourable getting out. Further, if you do so, you will be the sufferer. While your neighbours in Ceylon, Malay States and Java will get good price for their rubber, you will hardly get any for yours. As it is, you get a fairly good price for your rubber. But if you once decide to get out of the scheme, I am afraid the price of your rubber will go down to about nothing.

We have already given our word and we have now to legislate for the fulfilment of our promise. Export of rubber has already been restricted by means of a notification. The scheme will be in force for five years in the first instance. This is the third year of the scheme and it will continue till the end of 1938. The position will then have to be reviewed and the decision arrived at as to the necessity of continuing the scheme. I may say that there is a similar restriction scheme with regard to the production and export of tea. It has been found desirable to extend the period of tea restriction scheme for another five years.

MR. K. M. KURIAKOSE (*Muvattupuzha II*) : Will not our quota be revised again?

RAO SAHIB DR N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*) : It will not be revised till the end of 1938. It will certainly be advantageous to us to legislate for restricting the production of rubber in spite of the opposition of my friend Mr. S. J. Nair. I think rubber is cultivated in Nedumangad and he will do well not to oppose the motion.

MR. A. S. DAMODARAN ASAN (*Mavelikara*) : May I know whether, even in spite of the vigilance of Government, this planting has been going on?

RAO SAHIB DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*) : It has not been going on. One or two cases have been reported. But there has not been any appreciable extension of rubber plantation so far. The understanding is that production should be restricted by legislation, but planters knew that even without legislation prohibiting further planting, it will be suicidal to extend the cultivation of rubber.

MR. R. RAMAN PILLAI (*Changanachery* cum *Peermade II*) : Sir, I have only to say a few words. There are vacancies in the estate and planters should have the freedom to fill up those vacancies either by transplanting the present plants or by fresh cultivation. This aspect should also be taken into consideration.

RAO SAHIB DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*): I think the international scheme makes provision for renewals. I believe it is 10 per cent. or so for filling up vacancies and replacing the existing plants by budded plants.

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MR. S. J. NAIR (*Nedumangad*) : Sir, I oppose this Bill. This is one of the most useless, mischievous and dangerous Bills that have been brought before this House by the Law Member. The Law Member wants to restrict the liberty and freedom of the ordinary cultivator of the land to cultivate as he likes. He wants to perpetuate some sort of monopoly for some individuals. Sir, we have our own caste system which arose as the result of the professions we pursued. Now the Law Member wants to perpetuate a rubber-planting caste, a tapioca-producing caste and a paddy-producing caste (*Laughter*). Sir, the secret of this measure is this. We have had no price for rubber till recently. All on a sudden, due to the quota system, rubber planters have been induced to sell their rubber and thus get a profit. And they wanted to reserve and preserve that privilege for themselves.

Under the provisions of Part II of this Bill, control over extension of rubber cultivation is to be exercised. Clause 3 reads as follows :—

> "So long as this Regulation remains in force, no person shall plant rubber plants in any land, or replant any land with rubber plants, save in pursuance of a written permission granted by or on behalf of the Committee under this Regulation."

Clause 5 (*a*) reads as follows :—

> "(*a*) no person shall be permitted to replant in any year more than ten per cent. of the area of his estate that was planted with rubber plants on the 1st day of June 1934".

From these clauses, it would be evident that only existing rubber planters, that is persons who have already got the quota, would have the liberty to replant rubber plants. All other persons are perpetually excluded from pursuing the rubber cultivation, which has become the only profitable cultivation in the State.

MR. A. S. DAMODARAN ASAN (*Mavelikara*) : Is this prohibition intended to work against lands or against human beings?

MR. S. J. NAIR (*Nedumangad*) : If this Section is passed, we will find a particular caste known as the rubber-planting caste who can have their own factories, their own estates, plants, *chitties* and so forth at the cost of the poor cultivator. This sort of thing should not be permitted. This Bill affects the liberty of the agriculturists in this State. Here is an instance in which the Government wants to preserve a certain right for certain class, I mean the existing planters, so that other cultivators may not take up the cultivation of rubber at all.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT : You did not probably hear the Chief Secretary's statement that some restriction by international agreement is necessary to preserve the price of rubber. So that, if Travancore does not join that agreement, nobody in Travancore will get any price including those prospective planters you have in view.

MR. S. J. NAIR (*Nedumangad*) : Sir, we have got a rubber factory in Travancore. Another factory is going to be started in Calcutta. Even without this quota, we can sell our rubber. The agents of the Dunlop Rubber Company are going about for collecting rubber.

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MR. M. SIVATANU PILLAI (*Tovala*): May I ask the member whether our Rubber Factory will not consume the rubber produced here?

MR. S. J. NAIR (*Nedumangad*): Yes, there is great demand. Then there comes a Bill to restrict the power and the liberty of the ordinary cultivator. "Don't cultivate rubber. Leave it to us, the rich and the privileged class".

MR. PACODE A. NARAYANA PILLAI (*Vilavankod*): Is it not possible for one to be born in a family of rubber planters?

MR. S. J. NAIR (*Nedumangad*): I am glad that my friend has not put the question whether it is not possible to have marital relations with the families of rubber planters. I am sorry to say that that question is not apt so far as this Bill is concerned. This is the most mischievous and most dangerous and most useless Bill that has ever been brought forward by the official side. I appeal to my friends, the honourable non-official members, to ponder over the question patiently and decide for themselves. We, as the representatives of the ordinary cultivators in the land, should not allow this Bill to be introduced and passed.

MR. KAYALAM PARAMESVARAN PILLAI (*Additional Head Sirkar Vakil*): Sir, the opposition is based on a good deal of misconception. We are not going to create a rubber planting caste.

MR. S. J. NAIR (*Nedumangad*): May I ask whether any man who does not own a rubber plantation now will be allowed to plant rubber after this Bill is passed?

MR. KAYALAM PARAMESVARAN PILLAI (*Additional Head Sirkar Vakil*): No.

MR. S. J. NAIR (*Nedumangad*): May I ask whether a planter who owns an estate now can extend it?

MR. KAYALAM PARAMESVARAN PILLAI (*Additional Head Sirkar Vakil*): No, he cannot. There is provision for replanting. Section five provides for replanting to the extent of 10 per cent. in a year and 20 per cent. in all before the end of 1938. If a man owns 100 acres, he can replant only 10 acres in one year and 20 acres in all within the restriction period.

MR. S. J. NAIR (*Nedumangad*): May I know whether the member is aware that the agents of the Dunlop Rubber Company are roaming about for purchasing any amount of rubber?

MR. KAYALAM PARAMESVARAN PILLAI (*Additional Head Sirkar Vakil*): No, Sir.

MR. S. J. NAIR (*Nedumangad*): I am aware of it.

MR. KAYALAM PARAMESVARAN PILLAI (*Additional Head Sirkar Vakil*): The principle contained in the Bill is a very wholesome one and is very necessary for what I conceive to be a very advantageous scheme to which Travancore has been a party. At present the quota assigned to Travancore is about 12 thousand tons a year.

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MR. S. J. NAIR (*Nelumangad*) : May I ask how many cultivators in Travancore are being benefited by this quota ?

MR. KAYALAM PARAMESVARAN PILLAI (*Additional Head Sirkar Vakil*) : I have got a book here which gives full information on the subject. I shall give him the book. The names of about 30,000 people are given in the book, I think.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI (*Ambalapuzha I*) : Are there not persons holding about one acre and half an acre who are also benefited ?

MR. KAYALAM PARAMESVARAN PILLAI (*Additional Head Sirkar Vakil*) : Yes, there are.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI (*Ambalapuzha I*) : Is it not rather hard to expect them to keep accounts ?

MR. KAYALAM PARAMESVARAN PILLAI (*Additional Head Sirkar Vakil*) : There is some criticism about that. I am prepared to have that examined in Committee. I trust that the principle of the Bill will be accepted by the House.

The question that the principle of the Bill be accepted by the House was then put to vote and declared carried.

The Secretary read the title of the Bill.

MR. KAYALAM PARAMESVARAN PILLAI (*Additional Head Sirkar Vakil*) : Sir, I beg to move that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the following members :—

Mr. N. Abdur Rahiman Sahib
„ K. A. Narayana Pillai
„ K. Mahomed
„ N. John Joseph
„ S. J. Nair
„ K. P. Krishna Menon
„ P. C. Kuriyan
„ A. Thanu Pillai
„ V. K. Velappan Nair
„ K. N. Kuriakose
„ E. V. Krishna Pillai
„ T. K. Velu Pillai

MR. C. V. CHANDRASEKHARAN (*Ag. Director of Public Instruction*) : I second it.

The motion was put to vote and declared carried.

DEPUTY PRESIDENT : The committee will report within four months.

The House will now adjourn and meet again to-morrow at 11. A. M.

The House adjourned at 5-30. P. M.

K. MADHAVA KURUP,
Secretary to the Sri Mulam Assembly.

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